

PENNSYLVANIA—BROWNSVILLE.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

DELEGATES OF A CONVENTION AT BROWNSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA,

*Praying for an appropriation for the improvement of the Monongahela river  
from Pittsburg to Brownsville.*

FEBRUARY 2, 1835.

Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on bill H. R. No. 461.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United  
States in Congress assembled :*

The memorial of a large number of delegates, representing five counties and many towns of Pennsylvania, extending along the Monongahela river, from the head of the Ohio to the Virginia State line,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS :

That they assembled together at the borough of Brownsville at a very inclement season of the year, and at much inconvenience to themselves, in obedience to the requisitions of their fellow-citizens, to perform certain duties in their behalf.

Our constituents, as well as the members of this convention, have witnessed with unbounded satisfaction the arrival of that era, unprecedented in the history of other nations, when our country exhibits to the admiration of the world the noble example of a people having fully discharged that debt which was the price of its liberties and independence.

Their satisfaction, however, does not arise exclusively from the mere fact that this confederacy is unembarrassed by debt, but from the consciousness that the immense revenue of the nation may now be applied to the improvement of the country.

The history of this country, during the brief existence of our national constitution, has surely satisfied every intelligent mind that the union of these States is not to be perpetuated by mere words, although those words may be indelibly fixed upon paper or parchment.

The true and indissoluble bond of union must be formed by creating an easy communication and intimate intercourse between the citizens of the various sections of this extended country. A full assurance of the soundness of this position, combined with the conviction that the means of such communication and intercourse can be best provided by national means,

completes the gratification afforded to this convention and its constituents, by the glorious event of the first of January, 1835.

If that event should not, however, be followed by more liberal efforts for the improvement of the country, and for the strengthening the bonds of union, it will be but a barren and unprofitable occurrence. On the other hand, should it be the era of the introduction into our national councils of a more penurious course of policy, then its occurrence will be a matter of deep regret.

Confidently believing that the extinguishment of the national debt, and the consequent cessation of that annual demand upon the revenues of the nation, will be followed by a more liberal and paternal attention to the improvement of means of communication between the various parts of this country, your memorialists now address you.

That great work, the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, first suggested by the father of his country, is now advancing rapidly to Cumberland, and when completed to that point, the short land conveyance of seventy-three miles by the national road, will only intervene between the seat of the General Government and that river whose various branches extend into *thirteen* of the twenty-four States. Brownsville, on the Monongahela river, is the point which approaches thus near to that part of the great canal, which will probably be completed at an early day.

Nature, although she has not supplied this river with a quantity of water sufficient, at all seasons of the year, to afford steamboat navigation without the aid of art, yet she has, by giving it a gradual descent and gentle current, singularly well fitted it for improvement by the hand of man. Mr. Howard, a civil engineer of the United States, has twice, in two different seasons, examined this river from its termination at Pittsburg, to Brownsville, on the national road, and has twice declared it to be admirably calculated for improvement and adaptation to steamboat navigation at a moderate expense.

Your memorialists here beg leave to remind your honorable bodies that appropriations have already been made for clearing out the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and some progress made in the execution of that work; and to suggest, that the improvement of the Monongahela river would be but an extension of the former work, in a direction calculated to render it more truly national, by opening a more easy passage from the heart of the Union to the great valley of the West.

No nation can wisely calculate upon an exemption from the evils of war. Heretofore, during our brief existence as an independent nation, we have not been involved in any desperate struggle for our existence. But our free institutions, our rapid improvement, our increasing strength, and the happy condition of our republican population, certainly gain us no good will among the Powers of Europe. We may, therefore, well expect that the time *will* come, and perhaps soon, when we may be involved in an arduous contest for every thing dear to us as a nation. At such a time, the improvement of the Monongahela river, from Brownsville to Pittsburg, would be invaluable for the speedy transportation of troops, ammunition, and arms, from the great valley of the West to the seaboard, and from the seaboard to the interior.

Your memorialists would also state that the country along the Monongahela river and its various branches is unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, by any other in this Union, in the abundance and importance of its mine

erals, and of its agricultural and manufactured products. Inexhaustible mines of bituminous coal, of the very best quality, extend along the banks of this river, from its mouth upwards, more than one hundred miles, and already the towns along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, from Maysville to New Orleans, are supplied with large and increasing quantities of this valuable fuel. The immense quantity of *iron ore* which exists along this river and its various branches will, at some future period, furnish materials for furnaces, foundries, forges, and rolling mills, whose numbers we will not pretend to estimate; but already sixteen furnaces, seven forges, two rolling mills, one nail, and two steam engine factories, exclusive of those in the city of Pittsburg and vicinity, are employed upon the product of this region.

Your memorialists decline troubling your honorable bodies with detailed statements of the agricultural products of the valley of the Monongahela. They will, however, state that, from a careful examination, they are satisfied that the value of the *flour*, annually produced in more than three hundred mills, exceeds six hundred thousand dollars, and that the *wool*, produced in the same region, exceeds two hundred thousand dollars.

For a more full and minute statement, your memorialists would refer your honorable bodies to a report of the mineral and agricultural products and manufactured articles, prepared with much care by a committee of this body.

From this summary of but a few articles it appears that this interesting valley abounds with inexhaustible quantities of *fuel*, so necessary for the comfortable enjoyment of life; *iron*, that most valuable of all metals, whether required for the profitable pursuits of the arts in time of peace, or for successful defence in time of war; *flour*, which forms so large a portion of the subsistence of every class of our population; and *wool*, so indispensable for clothing in the United States.

Your memorialists will merely add, that the value of various articles manufactured in the city of Pittsburg and vicinity and not embraced in the foregoing remarks, are ascertained to exceed three and one-half millions of dollars, the materials of a large portion of which are furnished from this interesting valley.

Your memorialists, therefore, trusting that your honorable bodies will properly appreciate the importance of this work, in a national point of view, as a bond of union, and as a route of speedy transportation of arms, ammunition, and men, in time of war, and distinctly perceive the immense benefit which it will confer upon a vast extent of our country, by facilitating the supply, and cheapening the price of indispensable articles, such as fuel, iron, flour, &c., earnestly ask an appropriation for the improvement of the Monongahela river from Pittsburg to the national road at Brownsville, according to the plan suggested by Mr. Howard.

#### ALLEGHANY COUNTY.

*Pittsburg.*—Thomas Bakewell, N. B. Craig, N. C. B. Miltenberger, R. M. Riddle, James H. McClelland, James B. Irwin, D. Hartford, and James E. Breading.

*Elizabethborough.*—Samuel Frew, F. C. Flanagan, Samuel Walker, J. R. Shields, J. H. Watson, Daniel McCurdy, and John Richards.

*West Elizabethborough.*—E. Percival, J. McFarland, A. Craighead, C. and J. Blair.

#### WESTMORELAND COUNTY.

John Power, John F. Beagel, Manassa Reves, Benjamin Thomas, Valentine Hush, Robert Cunningham, John Budd, M. Morgan, John Houseman, M. Finley, B. B. Smith, and George Fisher.

#### WASHINGTON COUNTY.

*Millsborough.*—W. K. Vankirk.

*Greenfield.*—Andrew Gregg, P. Thomas, J. Rothwin, J. Dewal, Samuel Crow, T. D. Piper, W. Veatch.

*Fredericktown.*—John Bowers, A. Alexander.

*Williamsport.*—Thomas McGoffin, Robert Love, W. Mills, John Hammons, S. Becket, J. Bently, jr., W. Impson, W. Bryant, and Benjamin Ferguson.

#### FAYETTE COUNTY.

*Uniontown.*—Samuel Evans, John Dawson, E. Bromfield, Gideon John, J. B. Howel, L. W. Stockton, Israel Wood, A. Watterton, W. Hart, and S. P. Sturges.

*Bellevernor.*—Solomon Spears, W. Reeves, H. H. Fencer.

*Cookstown.*—W. Eberhart, Aaron Bougher, J. Fenton, Eli Cope, Samuel Gaskill, George Whiting, and John Gue.

*Bridgeport.*—Elisha Hunt, B. Kimbo, Joel Oxley.

*Brownsville.*—James L. Bowman, Edward Campbell, Robert Clark, Israel Miller, and Henry Switzer.

#### *Extract from the minutes of the Brownsville Convention.*

“On motion, it was unanimously *resolved*, that Messrs. Miltenberger, Craig, and Bakewell, be appointed a committee, and that they be authorized to affix the names of the delegates in this convention to the memorial to Congress, and forward the same to Mr. Buchanan, of the Senate, and to Messrs. Denny and Stewart, of the House of Representatives.

M. B. MILTENBERGER, *Secretary*.

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The committee upon the mineral, agricultural, and manufactured products of the Monongahela region, reported as follows :

The committee, appointed to prepare and submit to this convention a statement of the manufactures and other business of the section of country interested in the contemplated improvement of the navigation of the Monongahela river, present, as the result of their labors, the annexed statement :

The very limited time allowed your committee for the discharge of this duty has not enabled them to do full justice to the subject. They have avoided making any statements which are not confirmed, either by the knowledge

of delegates present, or supported by authentic data ; it is their belief, therefore, that any imperfections in this report exist in undervaluing rather than overrating the manufacturing and other interests of the Monongahela region.

On reference to the statement annexed, it will be seen that the manufactures of flour and other grain, iron and nails, paper, glass, salt, wool, cotton, and lumber, the growing of wool, the building of steam engines, steam, keel, canal, and flat boats, amount annually to the sum of two million two hundred and forty-nine thousand four hundred dollars.

This statement may appear exaggerated even to this convention, although composed of individuals residing at various points of the district, which we are considering. We can readily imagine that very few are prepared to expect this result of our inquiries ; we invite, however, a close scrutiny of the report, convinced that a more deliberate and extended inquiry into the subject will only make more apparent the vast importance of the proposed improvement, not only to the Monongahela region, but to the west and southwest at large.

When it is considered that a business so extensive has been created and continues to exist, entirely dependent upon a precarious river navigation for indispensable supplies, and a market for its products, it is obvious that the natural advantages of the country are incalculably great. Nature has indeed munificently endowed the Monongahela region. Our inquiries extend from Clarksburg, Harrison county, Virginia, over those portions of the various counties on the river to the environs of Pittsburg, which, on the completion of the proposed improvement, would employ tonnage on the river ; and throughout this district the climate is salubrious, the soil, for the most part, fertile, and in every direction are to be found inexhaustible mines of bituminous coal, few of which have yet been opened or wrought to any considerable extent, and in many cases this coal is found closely adjacent to beds of iron ore. We cannot affix a limit beyond which the importance of the manufacturing and agricultural interests of this region may not extend its growth, after the contemplated improvement of the river shall have secured to these interests the facilities of transportation which alone are required to develop fully and bring into active employment the boundless resources of the country.

On the other hand, it is very plain that the business of manufacturing has already begun to languish in this section ; and, if not yet diminished, it is clear that this interest cannot continue to flourish under present circumstances.

The manufacturer may deposite his blooms, or pig iron, or flour, or glass, upon the shore ; the contractor may finish the building of his boat—up to that point competing successfully with those located on more navigable waters ; and yet the fruits of his toil may be, month after month, awaiting the uncertain rise of water, until contracts are violated, and he is thrown unseasonably upon the chances of a market already chiefly supplied.

The report of Dr. Howard, communicated to Congress in April last, proves that the improvement in the navigation of this river, from Pittsburg to Brownsville, may be effected at a cost considerably short of a quarter of a million of dollars. A similar sum, it is believed, would continue the work as high as Harrison county, Va. The whole sum required, then, to complete this important improvement, would be less than half a million of dollars.



Your committee indulge the hope that the great benefits which this moderate expenditure of public money promises to dispense far and wide will ensure its appropriation.

## STATEMENT.

Merchant flour mills,	-	-	-	270 flour,	\$405,000
Do. do. steam,	-	-	-	30 do.	267,800
Steam saw mills,	-	-	-	32 lumber,	57,600
Water do.	-	-	-	272 do.	81,000
Paper mills,	-	-	-	8 paper,	190,000
Salt works,	-	-	-	7 salt,	30,000
Woollen factories,	-	-	-	4	95,000
Cotton do.	-	-	-	2	40,000
Rolling mills,	-	-	-	2	37,000
Green glass-works,	-	-	-	12	175,000
Vial do. do.	-	-	-	2	40,000
Blast furnaces,	-	-	-	12 500 tons ea.	180,000
Forges, -	-	-	-	7	78,750
Air furnaces,	-	-	-	4	64,000
Nails, -	-	-	-	1	8,250
Engines,	-	-	-	2	50,000
Tonnage, 20 steamboats, 3,000 tons, a \$70,					200,000
Do. keels, flats, and canal boats,					
Coal,					60,000
Wool, grown,	-	-	-	-	200,000
					<u>\$2,249,400</u>

DEAR SIRs: You will receive herewith a copy of the proceedings of a convention held, at Brownsville on the 23d instant, together with a memorial to Congress adopted there, which we were directed to forward to you, and to request that you would *jointly* lay the same before the House of Representatives.

As the members of the convention were compelled to leave Brownsville before the memorial was copied, we were authorized to affix their names thereto, which will explain the circumstance of the signatures being all in the same handwriting.

Many of the persons composing this convention are, doubtless, well known to you; and, as you will perceive, belong to various classes of the community, different locations, and opposing political parties, and are highly respectable members of society.

The report of the statistical committee is as full as circumstances would permit, and it is, we believe, rather below than above the mark, as relates to the amount of the agricultural and manufacturing industry of the valley of the Monongahela.

We have no doubt of your being fully convinced of the importance of this object, not only to the state of Pennsylvania, and especially to that portion which you represent, but also to a considerable portion of Virginia,

and hope, on that account, you will be able to secure the co-operation of some of the representatives of that great and powerful State.

We beg leave to solicit your exertions in bringing the subject before Congress.

We are, dear sirs,

Yours, respectfully,

**M. B. MILTENBERGER,  
NEVILLE B. CRAIG,  
THOS. BAKEWELL.**

**A. STEWART and H. DENNY, Esqrs.**

